

# Chapter One



*A*

**Brief Look at History**

*Of*

**Islam and Confucianism**

**---Development of Ethical Theories**

## **1.1 Islam Is a Relatively Young and Wide Spread World Religion**

Islam as the latest (AD 610) comer of the world great religions chronologically revealed after the appearance and spread of Judaism of Jewish religion, Christianity, Buddhism, and the Confucian civilization<sup>6</sup>, has showed its incomparable attractiveness in converting people from its very beginning. Its breathtaking pace of expansion throughout the world astonished civilizations, which is noted even by western scholars. Samuel M. Zwemer, a Christian missionary, exclaimed: "One hundred years after Muhammad's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) death his followers were masters of an empire greater than Rome at the zenith of her power. They were building mosques in China, in Spain, in Persia, and in Southern India!"<sup>7</sup> Islam achieved this duo to the abundance of its attractive features, such as simplicity, suitability to human nature, its scientific nature, virtues and lenience towards its non-Muslim subjects (*Ahli Dhimmah*) and so on. These noble features made Islam acceptable to all human races, be it white or black, yellow or dark, Westerner or Easterner. Any individual, endowed with reason and common sense, can easily embrace Islam as his/her religion.

### **1.1.1 Islam in History**

#### **Pre-Islamic Ethics in Arabia**

Arabia in pre-Islamic history was predominantly a bedouin nation. The nature of the nation requires its members to be courageous, generous, hospitable, and loyal in defending the honor of the tribe. Economic insufficiency and almost constant state of famine generally governed their rules of conducts. They also loved woman, wine and music, and their view of life was hedonistic.<sup>8</sup> As Sayyid Fayyāz quoting Nicholson said: "bravery in battle, patience in misfortune, persistence in revenge, protection of the weak, defiance of the strong were their chief characteristics."<sup>9</sup>

### **Ethics in the Qurān and Hadīth**

Islamic ethics, like other Islamic sciences is based on the Qurān and the traditions of the Holy Prophet. The Qurān lays down the foundation of a religious system on purely ethical principles<sup>10</sup>, and the traditions of the prophet give detailed explanation and completion to the Qurānic principles. One of the famous sayings of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) says: "I am sent to complete noble moralities." To some extent we may say that Islamic teachings are completely ethical injunctions.

Muslims started the study of ethics along with the study of the Qurān and Hadīth. Their peculiar characteristics are learnt from these two sources.

The Qurān talks the ethical character in the following passages chosen randomly:

*"And do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are of kin, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the way-farer (you meet), and that your right hand possess." (Al-Nisā' 4: 36)*

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ  
بِالْجُنُبِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ  
مُخْتَلًا ۚ فَأَقْرُبُوا﴾

"Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity;  
who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those  
who do good." (Al-ʿAmrān 3: 134)

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكُظُمِينَ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ  
عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and  
guard their modesty." (Al-Nūr 24: 30)

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ  
أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is  
good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are  
the ones to attain felicity." (Al-ʿAmrān 3: 104)

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ  
الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

Whole of the Qurān is full of such injunctions, as kindness to parents, kindred  
and forgiveness to those who err, piety, equity, just dealing, compassion, restrain  
of the lust, true nobility, modesty and so on, all find appropriate mention in the  
Qurān.<sup>11</sup>



## The Prophet as Ideal

Ethics in Islam, however, is not a dogma, but a guide to action. It is fully exemplified in the practice of the Holy Prophet throughout his life. The Qurān addresses the Prophet:

*"And surely you have sublime morals." (Al-Qalam 68: 4)*

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٦٨﴾

*"You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar; for him who hopes in Allah and Final Day, and who remember Allah much." (Al-Ahzāb 33: 21)*

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ  
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

The Prophet himself says: "I have been sent to complete the perfect morals." When he was asked: "What is Islam?" he replied: "Good character." The Qurān exhorts the believers to follow the other prophets as well saying:

*"There was indeed in them an excellent example for you to follow, for those whose hope is in Allah and in the last Day....." (Al-Mumtahinah 60: 6)*

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَ  
يَتَّبِعُوا رَسُولَهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦٠﴾

Every Muslim endeavors to reach the perfection of the Prophet's character, especially the immediate followers (Companions) of the Prophet, who showed their totally obedience to the Prophet, and tried their all best to act as what the Prophet acts. Therefore, they also are regarded by Muslims as patterns of good

conduct. They possessed all the good qualities, such as knowledge, understanding, piety, patience, gratitude and so on.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Development of Ethics in Islam**

Though the fundamental principles of ethics were present in the Qurān and Hadīth, ethics did not take a form of independent science until the influence of Greek thought asserted itself on the Muslim mind. The ethics, as in Greek thought, was studied and considered only as a part of politics. Muslims adopted this treatment to the ethics and did not give a special regard to it. The situation remained like this until Ibn Miskawaih's *Tahdhīb al-Akhālāq*<sup>13</sup>. Let us briefly review the development of the ethics in Islam.

#### **The Umayyads (AD 661-750)**

It has been seen that Arabs possessed certain moral values before the rise of Islam. After its rise, Islam kept some of their good conducts and prohibited some bad behaviors, and in addition set the Islamic moral values. Those values were practically embodied through the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his companions. The values of ethics were mainly orally conveyed to one another, and put into practice. In the Umayyad period, Muslims simply practiced what they practiced before in the time of the Prophet and rightly guided four Caliphs. There was no improvement to the Islamic ethical values, both in practice and intellectual level. On the contrary, they violated some Islamic values. Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyān, the founder of the regime, who was a great companion of the Prophet, and whom if is condemned or criticized, the critic deserves

punishment.<sup>14</sup> Though Mu'awiya himself did not claim that he wanted to be the caliphate when he fought 'Ali bin Abi Tālib, the caliph then, but somehow, the history of Islam recorded that Umayyads changed the caliphate into an empire system. They initiated the evil custom of condemning Ali openly in their *khutbah* on the Jum'a prayer. They also broke with the elective principle of succession practiced by the early caliphs. Islamic politics suffered a great setback when Mu'awiya's son Yezid assumed caliph seat. Furthermore, it was recorded by history that Yezid was a drunk, his morals were not so adhered to Islamic principles.<sup>15</sup>

#### 'Abbasids (AD 750-1258)

During this period the Muslim empire attained its greatest expansion, and is also noted for religious toleration, free thought, scientific researches, philosophical and cosmopolitan spirit and Persian influences<sup>16</sup>. The Caliphs of this period were liberal and patronized learning, their love for justice and interest in knowledge made Baghdad the center of learning in the world then. It was through their efforts, especially that of Ma'mūn, that Greek science and philosophy were preserved. The preservation of this Greek knowledge led to reconciliation between philosophy and religion. The famous philosopher Al-Kindi (AD 803-873) and his followers placed the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle on equal footing with that of the Holy Qur'ān<sup>17</sup>. They did not pay much heed to the science of the ethics. The human soul, according to Al-Kindi, is originated from the world soul. It has double faces. In its actual operation it is bound up with its body, yet in its spiritual essence it is independent of the body and connected with the world soul. Because

of this super nature of the soul, it is uncompounded, simple, imperishable substance. Furthermore, it always longs for the eternal and the permanent, and never satisfied with that which is ever changing. But the eternal and the permanent are only existing in the realm of reason and spirit. The real happiness and salvation of the soul, therefore, lies in the life of reason and spirit, that is in philosophical and scientific pursuits and religious and moral activities<sup>18</sup>.

Al-Farābi (AD 870-950) was born during the reign of Ma'mūn who "was the best example of the liberal prince, found only now and then in the annals of mankind."<sup>19</sup> He followed Plato, adhered to the Greek view of ethics. He sees that man is composed of two principles, body and soul. Body is material while soul is immaterial, body is measurable, divisible and limited by space, while soul is totally independent from these qualities. The former is a world of created while the later is a realm of the supersensible. The soul is demonstrated by its function of intellection and morality, which decide the operation of a being. The intellect feels not at home except in the state of spiritual, therefore, the soul must be spiritual. Al-Farābi views that the human soul is not immortal, the only thing that survives the dissolution of the body is the active intellect."<sup>20</sup>

The Brethren of purity (*Ikhwān Sāfa*) also deals with ethical problems. They assert that the human soul is of a divine origin. The union of the soul with matter is temporary. It possesses wisdom and faith, through which it endeavors to emancipate itself from the matter, that is the aim of life. Man has a natural longing for god. He strives to develop this innate feeling. The highest virtue is love, through which one struggles for union with God. The way to get this pure love is

the renunciation of the world and the doing of Good. From here we see that the characteristics of this ethical system of the Brethren is ascetic and spiritual<sup>21</sup>

Ibn Sina (370-428/ AD 980-1037) deals with ethical problems of human soul in deeper sense in his works *al-Najāt* and *Aḥwāl al-Nafs*. He advocates the view that the human soul possesses reason (or intelligence), which is divided by him into two kinds: the practical reason or active intelligence and the theoretical reason or speculative intelligence. The former is that on which morality depends, and the later is that which enables us to have abstract thinking<sup>22</sup>. The human being must follow the morality; his soul always yearns for intelligible world and its perfect beauty. But his attachment to the material world prevents him from reaching his destiny except he struggles very hard.

Ibn Miskawaih (334-422/AD 945-1030) is said that he was the first person who dealt with Islamic ethics systematically. He wrote a book titled *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, which is the first treatise of its kind viewing the ethical system of Islam<sup>23</sup>. Briefly, it asserts that the soul is a simple and self-conscious substance. It understands its existence and destiny. Its ultimate goal is to perfect itself. The way to achieve this is through an inherent rational knowledge, which helps it to distinguish the true from false, good from bad. The knowledge is the root of all virtue. To attain human perfection one must acquire knowledge. Man has ability to receive it. Between man and his goal stands the physical senses, which prevent him from attaining its goal, but his possession of the faculty of volition helps him in removing the veil. Further, man has three powers, appetite, anger and intellect. The power of intellect is consisted of two aspects, the theoretical and the practical. This later regulates man's powers in order to improve human conduct.

Man achieves his highest perfection when he has perfected these two faculties. He enjoins the highest happiness after the achievement of the perfection<sup>24</sup>.

Al-Ghazzālī (450-505/AD 1058-1111) as "the most original thinker that Islam has produced and its greatest theologian"<sup>25</sup> is also "the best-known Muslim writer on ethical subjects".<sup>26</sup> He deals with ethics in a number of his famous books, particularly the *Ihyā' ʿulūm al-Dīn* (Revivification of the Religious Sciences) and *Mizān al-ʿAmal* (The criterion of Conducts).

Al-Ghazzālī's works are enormously, intensively and profoundly discussed by many scholars, both Muslims as well as Orientalists, who draw both assertion and criticism of his works, starting from his live time till very recent. Relating to ethical sphere, Prof. M. Umaruddīn has written a remarkable book on Al-Ghazzālī's view on Islamic ethics, "*The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazzālī*". Though his view on the sources of Al-Ghazzālī's works is unacceptable<sup>27</sup>, (For Al-Ghazzālī was a very great criticizer of Greek philosophy), but his discussion on Al-Ghazzālī's ethical system is useful. The purpose of the studies of the Orientalist on Al-Ghazzālī's works is none other than seeking to trace the influence of Jewish or Christian ideas on Islam.<sup>28</sup>

Briefly, Al-Ghazzālī asserts that the essence of man is heart, which has a natural yearning for an ideal, which the heart always strives to realize. Heart is endowed with some qualities, which can help it to obtain the ideal. The most important qualities are *ʿaql* (intellect) and *irāda* (will). The intellect is the basis of *ʿilm* (knowledge), which is one of the corner stone of Al-Ghazzālī's ethical system.<sup>29</sup> The *irāda* is man's yearning for good. Besides all qualities endowed in man, such as anger, appetite, five senses, impulse and so on, *ʿilm* and *irāda* stand for, by

using *‘aql* (intellect), basic elements which gradually induce him to achieve his ideal.

The ideal of man, to Al-Ghazzālī, is utmost goal, or end, which insures the achievement of the greatest happiness. That goal Al-Ghazzālī calls as *sa‘ādah*, which implies the realization of the vision of God in the next world. This *sa‘ādah* could not be achieved by man unless he gradually perfects himself by observing religious virtues which are purposefully founded by Allah (subḥānahu wata‘āla). That is the guidance of Allah (subḥānahu wata‘āla).

Intellect ensures gaining knowledge, divine guidance keeps the knowledge obtained go directly to right path, not astray. If one can straightly go this direction, he is ensured of achieving his greatest happiness: vision of Allah (subḥānahu wata‘āla) in the next world.

Ibn Bājjah's (? - 1138) theory is essentially ethical<sup>30</sup>. He views that the main characteristic of man is reason. So man is in the intellectual or spiritual form, of which its characteristic is immaterial. Man's genuine vocation is also intellectual. Man has other subordinate forms of characteristics, but all of them are pretendedly inclined to contribute to the fulfillment of that vocation. If this process is ensured, man is definitely becoming a spiritual man. Only this man is truly happy. But, to Ibn Bājjah, that is not the ultimate end of man, man must attain the philosophical ideal of wisdom and partake of the highest moral virtues, then "he becomes truly divine and joins the ranks of the intelligible world."<sup>31</sup> That is the ultimate goal of man.

Ibn Khaldūn (1332 - 1406), a great commentator and historian, who also has given his unique ideas on ethics of human beings. He asserted that man is made up

of two parts: the corporeal and spiritual. To each part, the subject of cognition is same: that is spiritual part. This part sometimes apprehends spiritual, sometimes corporeal objects. The former it apprehends directly without any intermediary, whereas the latter it apprehends through the agency of such corporeal organs as the brain and senses. This spiritual part in man is known as soul (*al-nafs*), which can not be seen, but its effects are plain in the body, as though the body and all its parts, joined and separate, were instruments for the soul and its powers. This soul is the source of cognition, thought and action altogether at the same time. The soul partakes of the highest pleasure only when in possession of its spiritual object. This pleasure, however, is attained through direct mystical experience, in which "sensation has been completely transcended and the sense organs dispensed with altogether."<sup>32</sup>

### 1.1.2. Islam at Present

#### A. Modern and Contemporary Trends

(1) **The rise of the modernist spirit:** Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani and Muhammad °Abduh

In the latter nineteenth century, Muslim world was torn and colonized by the newly rising Western powers. Muslim tradition and Islamic culture were challenged by the colonist culture. Old Islamic traditional systems appeared not conformed with modern sophisticated sciences. The Islamic systems need an immediate reconstruction suiting to the demands of the present-day conditions. The first genuine modernist thinker in Islam was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani (1839 -



1897), "the herald of the new spirit of liberalism which ushered Islam into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."<sup>33</sup>

His view on ethics is, unlike traditional Muslim philosophers, derived from Islamic teachings, which asserts that man is the lord of all creations, and has spiritual nature, his life in this world is only a preparation for gaining a higher life in the world totally free from any mundane matters. And that life man is destined to go through.

Man's spiritual nature urges him to keep accord with religious virtues and living with his fellow man in peace; and keep himself away from bad impulses.

Religion has, despite of other beautiful virtues, taught its followers three traits: (1) modesty which prevents them from evil deeds, safeguards, and always leads them to repent; (2) honesty which is the most beautiful virtue of man in his interactions, both social, political or economics; (3) truthfulness which ensures human beings for their constant development, both material and spiritual.<sup>34</sup>

Al-Afghani's fresh mind attracted many students in the places he visited. One of his greatest disciples was an Egyptian Muhammad 'Abduh (1847 - 1905), who sees that man is endowed with reason, which distinguished him from animals. This reason is capable of making any distinctions between good and evil. These distinctions "are basis of the recognition of the differences between the virtues and the vices." "They are recognized as the causes of happiness or misery in this life, and as the reasons for the progress or decline of civilization, and of the strength or weakness of nation."<sup>35</sup> Yet, such rational distinctions are by no means sufficient for man in dealing with complicated human society. Man need to be cultivated with beautiful moral values. Religion provides all kinds of values; "its authority

over their souls is greater than the authority of reason." The essential morality, to him, is "faith in God alone, and sincerity in the performance of the prescribed religious duties (*ʿibādah*); and mutual aid of all man, one to another, in the day of good, and the prevention of evil in so far as they are able."<sup>36</sup>

Man's natural place in creation is vicegerent (*khalīfah*) of Allah on the earth. All creations are purposefully created for his use, for him to manage. It is his moral duty to strive to imitate those attributes that are possessed by Allah (*subḥānahu wataʿāla*), who pointed man as his vicegerent, and sends scriptures through his prophets as guidance for man.

## (2) **Modernism in India:** Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Iqbāl

Among the modernist Muslim thinkers, perhaps Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817 - 1898) was the most impacted by Western material development. He created "a syncretic brand of Islam which did not differ radically from Christianity."<sup>37</sup> To him, all religious beliefs must be in complete conformity with reason and nature. Those that are not are to be rejected. He criticized beliefs in angels and miracles as irrational.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan worked with English to the favor of English governance of India. His basic attempt was to keep Muslims being pleasant with the authority of English. In order to achieve this purpose he interpreted the term *jihad* and *ijtihad* in quite passive sense; but emphasized some Islamic virtues for cultivating self-discipline. He pointed out that "a good Muslim must be God-fearing, kind, respectful, humble, generous, thrifty, optimistic, chaste, just, responsible, law-abiding, accurate, meek and iconoclastic."<sup>38</sup> To Ahmad Khan, the straight path

(*ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*) is social harmonious balance. He particularly emphasized the concept of tolerance, its importance in especially the society he was living. His aim was to keep all citizens in peace, and direct them concentrating in social, economic development and industrialization of the country.

In the latter year of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's life, another modernist star arises in India. He is Dr. Muhammad Iqbāl (1878 - 1938), the best known as the modern Islamic philosopher and ethicist, who in his famous work *the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, discusses, in a totally new sense, human ego, man's freedom and immortality.

Rooted in the Qurānic teachings, Iqbāl draws his observations concerning the individuality and uniqueness of man from the Qurānic verses. He says that "three things are perfectly clear from the Qurān: (1) that man is the chosen of God; (2) that man, with all his faults, is meant to be the representative of God on earth; (3) that man is the trustee of a free personality, which he accepted at his peril."<sup>39</sup>

To Iqbāl, ego is the finite center of experience. It is a unity of mental states, which exist as phases of complex whole called mind. "The organic unity of these interrelated states is a special kind of unity." "Mental unity is absolutely unique." "The ego is not space-bound in the sense in which the body is space-bound." "The time-span of the ego is different to the time span of the physical event;" "the ego's duration is concentrated within it and linked with its present and future in a unique manner." Every ego has essential privacy, and is unique. It is able to retain full self-possession. When it reaches the "climax of this development", "the ego has reached the very highest point of intensity!" "This is the ideal of perfect manhood in Islam."

Self-affirmation is "the moral and religious ideal of man", one "attains to ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique".

Personality is "a state of tensions", "is the most valuable achievement of man". "That which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal. Thus the idea of personality gives us a standard of value; it settles the problem of good and evil. That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad.... The ultimate end of all human activity is life — glorious, powerful, exuberant!"<sup>40</sup>

## B. The Contemporary Ethical Scene

Al-Afghani, M. ʿAbduh, Ameer ʿAli and M. Iqbāl, each in their own way, reacted to Western cultural impact upon Islamic traditional thought. Although each had received certain ideas of the west, there remained at basis of their literal framework an element of mistrust of Western culture, and a sense of the superiority of the Islamic view of life.<sup>41</sup>

All Muslim modernist thoughts, from the time of Western colonism till very recent, have been merely reactions towards the same preoccupation with Western thought. There is no single person in Muslim world, after Al-Ghazzālī, who has developed a Modern Islamic ethical system from Islamic perspective. All we see about the themes of Islamic ethics from contemporary Muslim thinkers are those who criticize traditional theories or redefine their attitude towards the west. Sayyid Abul ʿAla Maududi's attempt is quite Islamic. He views that "the status of man in this world is that of an ʿabd (God's servant and slave) who is also *Khalīfah Allah* (Allah's deputy and vicegerent)<sup>42</sup>" on the earth. Man has been given the power of using all objects for his own benefit. And "in this lies his test and trial." Man's

"power and authority are bound to be limited," "the standards of right and wrong must be taken from the Sovereign" which belongs to Allah (subḥanahu wataʿala) alone. "The course of conduct has been laid down by the Lord," man is asked by Allah (subḥanahu wataʿala) to act following those conducts. Man's knowledge of good and evil is found in the guidance furnished by God through His prophets. "

Happiness in Islam "is the happiness which follows the observance of the law laid down by God." There is also perfection in Islam, which implies "emerging successfully from the test prescribed by God in the trial of one's existence." "The correct ethical conduct for an individual is to advance himself towards perfection and to assist and help others in the same direction."<sup>43</sup>

"Moral sense is inborn in man." "The sense of good and evil is inherent in the very nature of man." The Qurānic terminology of virtue is "*maʿrūf*" (the well-known things) and of evil is "*munkar*" (the unknown things).

The real and ultimate good of man's life is "seeking the pleasure of God." What result from this object is "the highest and noblest objective" set before humanity and thus opened unlimited possibilities for man's moral evolution.<sup>44</sup>

Another well-known figure of the modernist thinker is Professor Fazlur Rahman (1919 - 1988), who discusses the nature of man in his famous work *Major Themes of the Qurān*, in which he gives his psychological explanation of man. Supported by the Qurānic verses, Prof. says that man is God's creature, and is distinguished from the rest of natural creation. " *Nafs*, a Qurānic term, "simply means 'person' or 'self'<sup>45</sup>. Man is a vicegerent established on earth by God. He "possesses the capacity for creative knowledge". Satan is not satisfied with this arrangement of God; he stands "as an anti-man force, perpetually trying to seduce man away from

his natural 'straight' path in deviant behavior". This attempts of Satan "constitute the eternal challenge for man and renders his life an unceasing moral struggle".<sup>46</sup>

In order to let man fulfill his mission — the attempt to create a moral social order on earth — as God's vicegerent, he is created with an "unique order" and "endowed with free choice". His real nature is exalted, but, because "gravitating down from the heaven to the earth", "his conscience become dull and he can not effectively listen to the voice of his true, higher nature." "Their primordial nature has been distorted almost beyond recognition." This is why some people do not listen to the truth. Not only this, but they, supported by "false honor and pride — personal, family, national, and historical" — turn to resist and reject the truth. That, to Prof. Fazlur Rahman, is the Qurānic terminology *kufr*.

He goes on interpreting some important terms of the Qurān from psychological perspective. Take some instance, he interpreted *qadar* (or *taqdīr*) as "to measure out" some thing; *zulm al-nafs* as "an injustice against the agent himself"; forgetting God as "to destroy one's personality" while remembering God as "cementing personality". *Taqwā* is "to protect oneself against the harmful or evil consequences of one's conduct"; *ḍalālah* is "sterile, inconsequential, in vain" misguidedness, and its equivalent term *bāṭil*, is also used in this sense.

Man's basic weaknesses are pettiness (*daʿf*) and narrowness of mind (*qatr*), from which all of his major ills spring. The former produces pride, hopelessness and despair, while the latter results selfish, greedy, hasty, panicky behavior, lacking of self-reliance and fears.<sup>47</sup>

### C. Other Recent Development

Under the impact of the Western modern thought, and on reflection of Muslim *ulamā's*, especially Al-Ghazzālī's philosophical theory of the middle age, Muslim scholars at present point out that all Islamic sciences are deeply rooted in the Qurān and Hadīth. They urge Muslim scholars to derive values and principles from the entire Qurān. It would be possible to build an Islamic system, which is lacking from modern Islamic sciences, if Muslim scholars follow this principle.

Dr. Ismail al-Fārūqī (1921 - 1986), based on the Qurānic verses, asserts that *al-tawhīd* is the core value of Islam. It affirms that "the unique God created man in the best of forms to the end of worshipping and serving Him."<sup>48</sup> It also affirms that man is vicegerent for God on earth. Man's duty is obedience to God and fulfillment of His command. "God has invested man with His trust" which is meant the fulfillment of the "ethical part of divine will". In order to make man to be able to perform this great duty, God has endowed him with the senses, reason and understanding, yet "made him perfect". This is "the final end of human existence, man's definition, and meaning of his life and existence on earth."

He says that "all mankind is object of man's moral action; all earth and sky are his theater, his material. He is responsible for all that takes place in the universe, in every one of its remotest corners, for man's *taklīf* (responsibility or obligation) is universal, cosmic."<sup>49</sup>

Islam is not only this, but is actionalism, Islamic values and the Divine Will must be actualized in freedom and for the sake of God. One's happiness lies in the achievement of this actualization.

In the contemporary Islamic world, Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas is regarded as one of the great and original Islamic scholars. He deals with Islamic

ethics in his two major books: *the Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, and *the Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*. He elaborated the term *Dīn* in a very unique sense, which distinguishes the term from the concept of religion as interpreted and understood throughout the Western religious history. *Dīn* is much more comprehensive than religion; it implies four dimensions of meaning: (1) indebtedness; (2) submissiveness; (3) judicious power; (4) natural inclination of tendency.<sup>50</sup> He explains these primary significations and their correlation with other Islamic values, for example, *malakūt*, *khidmah*, *‘ibādah*, *fiṭnah*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and so on. Man is one of the creatures of God on earth, the purpose for his creation and existence is to serve God. Serving God is his natural inclination. Man is only God's vicegerent or *khalīfah*, who "is given the trust of government, the *amānah*, to rule according to God's Will and His pleasure". In this lies man's happiness. Happiness refers not to the physical entity in man, not to the animal soul and body of man, nor is it a state of mind. It has to do with certainty of ultimate truth and fulfillment of action in conformity with that certainty; and certainty is a permanent condition referring to what is permanent in man and perceived by his spiritual organ known as the heart (*al-qalb*).<sup>51</sup>

Unlike Prof. Fazlur Rahman, who criticized traditional understanding of Islam on the matters of man and his psychology, Prof. Al-Attas' view on the subject is quite traditional. He profoundly synthesized the subject according to the system set by Muslim scholars of middle age, especially Al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Sina, and Ibn ‘Arabi. Disagreeing with their position on the soul, Al-Attas affirms that the soul is pre-existent in relation to the body, provided that this pre-existence "refers to a



state of being unlike that of existence that is known to us, but to an existence in the interior condition of being, in the consciousness of God."<sup>52</sup>

It is important to note here that many contemporary Muslim scholars are in the opinion of that ethics in Islam has not been developed as a systematic philosophical theory. The opinion was voiced out during the seminar on "Ethics in Islam" held in *Faridabad, Haryana* India in 1988. The participants, especially Dr. Mohammad Abdul Haq Ansāry (presently a professor at Imam Muhammad Islamic University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia), Mr. Muqimuddin (the Seminar organizer), and Prof. Fazlur Rahman Ginnori, all shared the same opinion. Dr. Ansāri asserted that there is a well-formulated system of morality in the Qurān, but there is no such theorization in the field of ethics. Mr. Muqimuddin pointed out that ethics has developed in the west in the form of philosophical theories, but Muslim philosophers of the middle age did not pay much attention to the theoretical aspects of Islamic Ethics and virtually no effort has been made toward the documentation of ethics in Islam. Prof. Rahman emphasized that Islam has provided a complete code of morality obligating the need for theorization of Islamic ethics. Other participants all voiced out the need for an ethical theory of Islam.<sup>53</sup>

## 1.2 Confucianism is the Most Celebrated

### Traditional Chinese Culture

Confucianism is a term used by Western writers, which had its beginning in the teachings of Kong Qiu 孔丘 (B.C. 551-479) who was the founder of Ru 儒<sup>54</sup> school. Because of this association between Ru and Kong, they smugly transformed Kong Fu-zi 孔夫子 or Master Kong to Confucius, and led them to call Ru teachings Confucianism, and the Ru followers Confucianist<sup>55</sup>. No matter whatever the terms are used, they all manifested a fact: that the Ru philosophy has dominated Chinese thought for the last twenty-five centuries. It exerted the greatest influence upon Chinese life. It characterized the nationals, touched every corner of human activity. It pervaded all aspects of human worldly life, provided energetic virtues for the nationals in their struggle for survival and racial continuity in its long, eminent history, in which the Ru philosophy has showed its grand melting power. It conquered, not only by assimilation but also by political encouragement, its rivals by absorbing the good and useful thought from them, and pressed them down, then became a supreme domination in the sphere of Chinese life. It gave a tremendous impact upon their life in the sphere of material, spiritual, educational, political, social, ethical and moral and so on.

The evolution of Ru school 儒学 is also very complicated. To trace the very detailed stages of this development is, in fact, to write a history of Chinese thought itself, that is a task beyond our topic here. Therefore, to suit the subject here, it is just given a very precise frame outlook on Ru or Confucianism history.

### 1.2.1. Confucianism in History

#### Pre-Confucian Ethics in China

The origin of Confucianism can be traced back to the Duke of Zhou 周公<sup>56</sup> (12<sup>th</sup> century BC), who was a great thinker. Since his very small age, he showed his exceptional brightness and good ethical behaviors. During the kingship of his father Wen 周文王, he grew up ethically different from his other brothers. And when his brother king Wu inherited their father after the father's death, he helped him and was rather loyal to him. When the king Wu 周武王 died, his son was too young to perform his duty. The Duke of Zhou 周公 undoubtedly helped him without any harm to his authority. This value of practical ethics became sample value for Ru followers, highly praised by them. Master Kong set those values as the highest goal to pursue throughout his life. He admired the Duke of Zhou to such a degree that he did not see the Duke in his dream for three nights, he thought he was sick. The Duke of Zhou founded Li 礼 and Yue 乐, which were among the cores of Ru school. Li 礼 was basic theories of political administration. Yue 乐 was music, which played during celebrations.

#### The Ethical Theory of Master Kong

Confucianism is a purely ethical system. The greatness of Confucius lies in his creative contribution to the construction of an very unique ethical theory, which is founded on a set of basic systematic key notions: Ren 仁, Li 礼, Yi 义, Xin 信, Xiao 孝, Di 弟, Zhong 忠, Shu 恕, Zhong yong 中庸, De 德, Dao 道 and so on. A very brief introduction will be given to some of these core notions like Ren 仁, Li

礼, Zhong 忠, Xiao 孝, Xin 信 and Yi 义, for the rest like Shu 恕, ZhongYong 中庸, Dao 道 and De 德, and more profound elaboration will be discussed in the chapter three and four.

Ren 仁 is a core notion of Confucian ethical system<sup>57</sup>, which implies the following main dimensions of meaning:

- (1) Consanguineous relationship is the basic implication of ren, which means the relationship between parents and their children, and the relationship amongst children, and their relations with other kinship.
- (2) Ren is love of others. This is generalization of the love of relatives, extended to loving others who have no direct relationship with them.
- (3) Transmitting these loves into good conduct and behavior, affirm them as one's nature. If one continuously practices those loves, keeps himself acting in accordance with ren any time and anywhere, surely, after some time, it will become his instinct nature.
- (4) Ren is an ethical, social and political ideal. This is highest level of Confucian thought. If all members of a society achieve this goal through step by step gradual self-cultivation, that society is a model society characterized with ren ideals.

Li 礼 is the criterion of Confucian conduct, which implies social rites, ceremonies conducted in certain circumstances in relation to the people of different social positions. Li of Zhou 周 was the last goal to be achieved by Master Kong throughout his life. To Confucius, the general observance of li is important part of the ideal of ren. Li is the criterion of ren ideal.

**Zhong 忠** generally means trying one's best to help or serve others and his king. It is emphasized in managing interrelations between men; it is particularly emphasized in the relationship between king and his officials.

**Xiao 孝** meanly connotes the respect of children to their parents, and their assistance to them when they are getting old.

**Xin 信** means sincerity and truthfulness. It is not only an ethical notion to be cultivated in oneself in Confucian system, but also the basic foundation of administrating a nation state.

**Yi 义** is a notion that nearly can be simultaneously emphasized with Ren, which is attributed to loving relatives; yet, yi implies the significance of social ethics.

### **Confucius' Attitude toward God**

The underlying points of Confucianism are politics, social affairs and ethics. Confucius did not pay much attention to the concept of god, the structure of cosmos, human fate, soul and angels. But he did recognize the existence of the god (Tian 天 to him). He respected the god, feared his punishment, hence worshiped him. He believed in the determination of the god. But all these were very ambiguous. There was no specific and clear account on them.

### **The Source Books of Confucian Ethics**

The entire teachings of Confucianism are based on six classics: The Classic of Poetry 《诗》, the Classic of History 《书》, the Record of Rites 《礼》, Music 《乐》, the Classic of Change 《易》, and Spring and Autumn 《春秋》.<sup>58</sup>

The Classic of Poetry 《诗》 is a collection of ancient poetry, which already existed before Master Kong who compiled it through a thorough revision and classification and headlining. The criteria of revision was whether those poetry cohered with li 礼 and yi 义 which normally known as propriety and righteousness. It has very important political significance.

The Classic of History 《书》 is the compilation of the ancient three Dynasties history, namely Xia 夏朝 (BC 2205? - 1766), founded by the sage king of Yu 禹; Shang 商 (or Yin 殷 BC 1766? - 1122), founded by the sage king of Tang 汤; and Zhou 周 (Feudal Age BC 1122 - 256), founded by the sage king of Wen 文王. Many Ru scholars insist that this classic has significance of "spreading great way, resolving all doubts, curbing chaos and founding great political administration."<sup>59</sup>

The Record of Rites 《礼》 is the most important core of Ru school. The whole Confucianism is concentrated on li 礼 and Yi 仪. The Record of Rites is the systems of decrees and regulations which embraced nearly all human private and public relations, for example kingdom politics, the thought of polytheism, military regulations, adult courtesy, social etiquette, marriage ceremony, patriarchal system, personal adornment and so on<sup>60</sup>.

Music 《乐》 was the ancient music score, which was lost since its very beginning. So Six Classics become Five Classics 《五经》 that were known to later generations. Ru scholars insisted that Music also played one of important role in politics.

The Classics of Change 《易》 is a book of ancient divination. Ru scholars regard it as a book of heavenly guidance or saintly guidance.

Spring and Autumn 《春秋》 was chronicle annals, which mainly focused on Lu State 鲁国 where Master Kong was born in. Intending to carry out his political ideas, he wrote the book at background of unethical behaviors of people at that time. It provided for later generation the method of managing state. It is due to this reason, the great thinkers in the later times till latter Qing Dynasty 清朝 (AD1644 - 1911) always tried to seek help of governing state from it to make their political plan.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Development of Ethics in Confucianism**

The period when Master Kong 孔子 was known in history was the warring states 春秋战国 (BC 480 - 222). Since then on in its history, Confucianism underwent many changes. Many Confucian scholars divided its whole development into four major periods:<sup>62</sup> (1) Former Qin Dynasty 秦朝, (2) Two Hans Dynasty 两汉, (3) Song 宋, Yuan 元, Ming 明 Dynasties, (4) Modern Neo-Confucianism<sup>63</sup>.

#### **(1) Former Qin Dynasty 秦朝 (221 BC - 207 BC):**

##### **The Foundation of Confucianism**

After three sample unity Dynasties Xia 夏朝 (2205? - 1766 BC), Shang 商 (1766? - 1122 BC) Zhou 周 (Feudal Age 1122 - 481 BC), China fell into historical chaotic period. There were seven big states now emerged to overrun practically the whole country. Every king of the respective state struggled for supremacy among the great powers.

The period of warring states was not only an age of political disunity, but also one of intellectual activity, in which a hundred schools of philosophy arose to vie for supremacy. It was indeed an age of prominent scholars and brilliant thinkers; but among them Meng Ke 孟軻 or Meng Zi 孟子 or Mencius stood out as the greatest, using his eloquent conviction, facing other schools challenges, he convincingly defended Ru doctrines against them. He also elaborated the Kong dogma until it attained a high standard of perfection<sup>64</sup>. Because of his unique contribution to Ru school, posterity of Ru school honored him a very high position only next to the founder Master Kong himself. Some Confucian scholars even placed him as the second founder of the Ru school<sup>65</sup>. Because of his this importance, it is worth of mentioning his theory of ethics.

### **Ethical Theory of Mencius**

Mencius (or Meng Ke 孟軻) inherited Master Kong's thought, not only he taught it to others and practiced it throughout his life; but he enlarged Kong's system and elaborated it from different dimension in a deeper sense.

In the ethical theory of Confucius, Ren and Li are two basic fundamental notions. Mencius inserted another two important notions Yi 義 and Zhi 智 into this system and equalized them, led the four notions became the key notions of Confucian ethical system. Among the four, ren 仁 and yi 義 occupied the position of core and central and entity, li 禮 and zhi 智 are coordinates; ren and yi are actually different dimensions of one ethical ideal, ren inclines to inner development while yi normally means external orientation.



Master Kong gave no account on the topic of human nature except in one place wherein he said that "human natures are alike, but learning lead them apart". Mencius is renowned for founding the theory of that human nature is good. He draws his theory from certain aspect of innate human instincts, for example, a child's love for his parents, feelings of sympathy, feelings of shame and hatred, the sense of good and evil and so on, these all are fountain source of goodness of human nature.

It must not be forgotten to mention Xun Qing 荀卿, a contemporary of Mencius, who, unlike Mencius, emphasized li 礼 from Confucian ethical system. He regarded li as fundamental principle of social ethics and political life. But, li is paralleled with Fa 法, legal regulations. Li and Fa are two complementary notions.

He pointed out that Tian 天 is nature, it is restrained by natural law. Man can learn this natural law, hence can control it; but man must apt to the natural law, not to offend it. Using his wisdom and dynamic nature, surely can he manages the world and arrange it.

Human nature, to Xun Qing, is evil. But through self-cultivation by practicing Confucian ethical virtues, man can direct his evil nature to the good. This theory of evil nature of man is stemmed from some aspects of human innate entity, such as love of wealth, envy, hatred, love of music, beauty and so on. If all these evils are not controlled, they definitely will lead man to evil deeds. Therefore, man must learn li, confine his behaviors within the realm of li, and cultivate li in himself, so he can achieve the ultimate ideal of Confucianism.

Confucianism, however, could not get privileged position as the orthodox teaching in China during the lifetime of Master Kong and Meng, and even later in Qin Dynasty 秦朝<sup>66</sup>.

Not only this, the Emperor of Qin 秦 listened to his legalist Grand councilor Li Si 李斯 and banned Confucian books, especially the Classics of Poetry 《诗》 and the Classics of History 《书》. Many books were put on fire. But that was not all, even more catastrophic event was burying Confucian scholars alive. It is said that no less than 460 Ru scholars were put to death a year after that fateful edict.

## (2) Two Han Dynasties 两汉

Two Hans mean the Western Han 西汉 (206 B.C. - 25 A.D.) and the Eastern Han 东汉 (25 - 220 A.D.). After founding of the Western Han Dynasty in the wake of Qin 秦, the Confucian scholars were once more active; they were not perished altogether by Qin.

The situation seemed not so promising in the beginning years of the Han period. The first four Emperors had little interest in the Confucian teachings. When the kingship of Han handed down to the fifth Emperor Wu 汉武帝, Kong school got full support from him, who adopted a prominent Confucian scholar Dong Zhong-shu's 董仲舒 (179? - 104? BC) suggestion: "dismiss the non-Kong schools, give the Kong scholars the monopoly of learning 独尊儒术, 罢黜百家." The Kong doctrine was, for the first time, adopted as a state dogma.

The Kong doctrine was mainly five classics: the Classic of Poetry, the Classic of History, the Classic of Change, the Record of Rites, and Spring and Autumn. After those dogmas became state doctrine, it soon held the reins of education, and

dominated the Chinese intellectual scene, and continued doing so in the coming twenty-five centuries.

Dong Zhong-shu 董仲舒 upheld the five Confucian ethical virtues, which were based on Master Kong's and Meng's ethical system, Ren 仁 (Human heartedness), Yi 义 (Righteousness), Li 礼 (Propriety), Zhi 智 (Wisdom), Xin 信 (Sincerity)<sup>67</sup>. A detailed discussion of these terms will be carried out in the chapter three and four.

Throughout two hundred years history of the Western Han, Confucianism reached its summit of development. Human history shows that when any thought reaches its climate of full mature, it will be divided into the variety of subdivisions. Kong school too could not avoid this historical truth. The argument between the old script sect and the new script sect had taken place. As a result, two imperial conferences were summoned respectively in 54 BC and 79 AD. The purpose was to show up the superiority of respective group, and indeed it resolved differences and fixed an official interpretation of Kong classics. Later on, the great Han historian put together the council's deliberations in a comprehensive memorial that summarized for posterity the Ru teachings of the Han period.<sup>68</sup>

### (3) Song 宋 Yuan 元 Ming 明 Dynasties

When the great triumph of the Ru school in the latter Han Dynasty 后汉或东汉 was ensured, another new philosophy of life, Buddhism was also introduced to Chinese people. It was in the first century of AD, Emperor Ming 汉明帝 of the latter Han Dynasty accepted Buddhism as his belief. He played a great role in spreading Buddhism far and wide in China. Buddhism scriptures were published

and extensively translated into the Chinese Language. Shortly after that, a large number of monks appeared in all streets. It is very important to point out that during permeation of Buddhism into Chinese life, it found assistance from Chinese Taoism, another influential philosophy of China then, they worked together to the attempt of dominating philosophy of the state instead of Ru school. Facing this situation, a number of Ru scholars arose at this historical moment. The most famous denunciation of Buddhism came from Han Yu 韩愈 (768 - 824 AD), who fought scholarly with some other scholars against Buddhism, and they contributed very much to the reestablishment of the sovereign of Ru school. But under strong challenges of Buddhism and Taoism, it could not stand onto its old scriptures. It absorbed some ideas from the both and formed the neo-Ru school or neo-Confucianism, and re-dominated the Chinese intellectual scene again.

It should be noted here that the orientation of neo-Confucianism is different from that of its earlier development. Neo-Confucianism mainly concerns with cosmology, moral and epistemological reflections. The founder of the new philosophy was Zhou Dun-yi 周敦颐 (1017 - 1075 AD), who introduced into Ru philosophy the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate. He consigned the thought to his pupils: the brother Cheng Hao 程颢 and Cheng Yi 程颐, who in turn passed it onto their students, until it came at last to the hand of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130 - 1200 AD), in whose endeavor the Song philosophy reached its culmination.

In ethical aspect of the neo-philosophy, man is regarded as the highest of all creation, and the sage the greatest of all man.<sup>69</sup>

Now, the Cheng brothers have arisen. In their hands the neo-Ru philosophy reached its formative stage. One great contribution made by Chengs was the

introduction of li 理 (law) as an important concept in the new philosophy. Li is an immaterial cosmic principle to be distinguished from qi 气, the ether, of which all material things are made. Li 理 is the origin of everything; and everything has its own li 理, yet everything shares a common li 理. Li is not only the originator of cosmos and its master, but also has ethical value. All social ethical values are regarded as heavenly li 理.<sup>70</sup>

Though usually mentioned together with Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130 - 1200 AD) lived about a hundred years after them. By his endeavor, the neo-Ru philosophy reached its highest development. His commentaries and expositions of Confucian classics dominated Chinese world for 500 years, starting from fourteenth century up to the very beginning of twentieth. It was he and his group who first exalted the Analects 《论语》, the Great Learning 《大学》, the Doctrine of the Mean 《中庸》, and Meng Zi 《孟子》 as the four great books of Kong school, second only to the five Classics.

In ethical aspect, Zhu Xi asserted Cheng brother's theory, said that man like every physical object in nature, is a composition of both li 理 and qi 气. This li 理, which is no other than human nature, is the same for all man, but it is the qi 气 in its various proportions and densities that makes man different from each other and other species. He asserted that "he who receives a qi 气 that is clear becomes a sage; but he who receives a qi 气 that is turbid will become a fool or a knave".<sup>71</sup> How can a fool improve himself / herself? He must find the root of all evil, which is understood as man's desire that causes this obscuring. It is to this point alone that all efforts of man should be directed.

To maintain the status of the sage one must aim at two things in particular: the excise of the attentiveness and the extension of knowledge. The first idea means that one should constantly keep his eyes on the contamination of murky desires.

Zhu Xi also paid his attention to both moral self-cultivation and the accumulation of empirical knowledge.

Self-cultivation involves ge wu zhi zhi 格物致知, which is interpreted by him to mean observing (ge 格) li 理 existing in everything (wu 物) using human innate knowledge (zhi 致) to expand one's mind (zhi 知).

But his unique thought was not beyond criticism, his theoretically close relationship with Cheng brothers often led scholars speak of a Cheng Zhu 程朱 school. Opposition to him came from his contemporary Lu Xiang-shan 陆象山 (1139 - 1193), whose teachings inspired Wang Yang-ming 王阳明 (1472 - 1529). scholars also speak of a Lu Wang 陆王 School, whose argument with Zhu is mainly focused on the definition of li 理, which the later viewed it as mind. He said that there is no li 理 outside the mind, or even that the mind is identical with li 理. To understand things must go to the mind for examination. The entity of the mind is nature. Nature is li. The nature of man is neutral, does not incline to good or bad.

Since li 理 is already in the mind, self-cultivation should definitely direct to the mind, constantly correcting behavior and eliminating selfish desire. Ge wu 格物, thus, come to mean correcting (ge 格) of the activities of one's mind (wu 物), and allowing full application (zhi 致) of one's innate knowledge (zhi 知)

#### (4) Modern Neo-Confucianism

In the last years of the nineteenth century, China underwent a disastrous age. Western powers encroached, and the political situation of the country was very unstable; at the same time, all kinds of Western philosophies were introduced into Chinese people. Those philosophies were all culturally Western oriented, which were totally varied from traditional Confucian thought. In order to seek solution for the contradiction between the western thought and the traditional Confucian thought some of scholarly reformers tried either to reconcile Ru dogma with the Western imperialism philosophy or to prove modern trends with Ru Classics. The leader of this movement was Kang You-wei 康有为 (1858 - 1927), who set forth his political ideas in the name of Confucian dogma; he advanced his reforms on the authority of the sage kings of antiquity. He presented Master Kong in the role of a great reformer, a man of social vision, who could serve as a pattern for Kang's own political activities.<sup>72</sup>

In order to achieve his political mission, Kang You-wei reinterpreted all Ru classical records, which have been dominant thought in China for thousands years. He drew from it an ideal Great Unity 大同, in which he described there are no national or provincial boundaries, and life is totally communal and equalitarian, tied together by ren 仁, which was understood to mean an undifferentiated feelings of humankindness.

Another famous figure was Kang's student Liang Qi-chao 梁启超 (1873 - 1929), whose main concern was cultural and political reforms or reaffirmation of Confucianism, which has less significance to our concern.

Kang's political reform was approved a failure. After him China underwent a chaotic period. All kinds of the western alien thoughts were shifted into the

country by the students who had studied abroad. The thoughts such as Pragmatism, Machism, Bergsonism, Nietzscheanism, Kantism and Hegelism and Marxism all got a certain stand there. Among those philosophies Marxism was most widely spread throughout the country. Meanwhile, modern neo-Confucianism asserts that Chinese traditional philosophy must be the base for all thoughts, absorbing some ideas of Western philosophies, reform Classical Confucianism to suit modern society. Unfortunately that attempt was not materialized due to the establishment of the Communist government.

### 1.2.2 Confucianism at Present

#### A. The Rise of the Contemporary Neo-Confucianism

In response to the immediate social and political problems, some Chinese scholars advocate reforms of the Chinese traditional system in various degrees. These include learning the Western techniques as means to upholding the traditional Confucian way of life. Inspired by the earlier contemporaries like Kang You-wei 康有为 and Liang Qi-chao 梁启超, Liang Shu-ming 梁漱溟 (1893 - 1988), Feng Yu-lan 冯友兰 (1895 - 1990), Xiong Shi-li 熊十力 (1885 - 1968) and He Ling 贺麟 (1902 - 1992) stand out to defend Confucian thought, promoting a blended thought of the traditional Confucianism with certain Western philosophical characteristics or Buddhism notions.

Liang Shu-ming emphasized cultivating qing 情 (genuine or essential)<sup>73</sup> and abolishing ego. To him, genuine is a free perception, implies practicing ren 仁 and



being happy with self-achievement. Nature has its laws. It is enough for man to freely act with instinct perception. Ren 仁, to him, is human nature, instinct and innate perception. So practicing ren 仁 is totally man's natural inclination. There is no need for compelled cultivation.

No ego means, to Liang, casting out interference of reason to perception. Ego implies selfishness, mind of endowing in wealth and fame. Reason is cardinal element that leads man to a false worldview; it is also a cardinal factor of causing desires.

To Liang, an ideal society is a society in which people are interacting ethically; ethical interaction of one with another is compulsory. Thus in the ideal society, there are no classes, no occupational distinguish. The relationship between men is deeply rooted in their natural relationship. A person, since his birth, is bound to have relationship with his parents, brothers and sisters, and with the members of the society; these relations have natural bases, hence all kinds of ethics are generated hereof. To some, the society, which is based on natural relations, is the ideal society.<sup>74</sup>

Feng Yu-lan, a famous Neo-Confucian philosopher, is a contemporary of Liang Shu-ming. His view on ethics is perceptionism. He pointed out that the degree of man's perception toward life is different. So the world appears differently to every body. One degree constitutes one sphere, but all degrees can be categorized into four spheres: (1) the natural spheres; (2) the utilitarian spheres; (3) the moral spheres; (4) the transcendent sphere.<sup>75</sup>

(1) Man's action follows, unreflectively, his natural instincts, or his personal habits, or the customs of the society in which he lives. He acts without

understanding of his action, why he acts and for what he acts. His actions are unconscious. That is the sphere of natural.

(2) Man who is characterized in this sphere is aware of himself. He tries to distinguish himself from others. He endeavors for his own position, reputation, personal property and so on. His characteristic is egoistic "profit".

(3) Man who is in moral sphere is acting with yi 义, which means he devotes himself to the profit of the society in which he lives. He acts for the sake of the society; he puts his duty towards the society above his own profit and fame; he understands human nature, knows the nature of the society. An individual is none other than a member of the society.

(1) In the transcendent sphere, man's actions are devoted to heaven. Man knows the perfection of the society, and understands the perfectness of the heaven. He performs his duty not only to the society, but also to heaven. Feng calls man in this sphere a "prophet" or perfect man.

## **B. Recent Confucianism Scene**

After the Communist took over the political power in China in 1949, Confucian tradition temporarily ended its dominant influence in its motherland, but playing very important role outside of the country. In the countries like Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, Confucian values contributed so much to their political orientations and economic achievements. But their political entity, social structures and economic system are based on Western pattern. With the development of Western pattern economy, social maladies inherent in that pattern

become increasingly manifest. Peoples in those societies are attempting to re-emphasize Confucianism in its full scale expecting to adjust those maladies.

In the recent few decades, Confucianism is more and more discussed in the scale of international forums, especially in United States. It is pointed that the great economic achievement in Japan should be attributed to Confucianism.<sup>76</sup>

Seeing opportunity of re-emergence among the world great civilizations, new Confucian posterity, like Mu Zong-san 牟宗三 in fifties and Du Wei-ming 杜维明 and Liu Shu-xian 刘述先 in eighties has arisen. The main characteristic of these Confucians is that they all assert that Confucian traditional teachings still can fit (not unfit) modern social development, yet it can contribute to curbing calamities associated with high rapid development of science and technology. They also find the relationship between Ru school and modernization. Mu Zong-san holds a view of that if Ru school wants to regain the third term development, it must require democratic politics, which embodies freedom, justice and human rights. If this democratic politics and modern science can be absorbed into traditional Ru school, which contains moral and ethical values that once have led China to a developed nation, Ru school surely can regain another success.

In ethical aspect, the present Ru scholars attempt to interpret Ru traditional values from a different angle. For example, Mu Zong-san asserts that man, in one aspect, has a feeling of crime or evil, and in other aspect, he possesses moral consciousness and suffers from torment of evil feeling, which encourages him trying to get rid of criminal abyss. From here it clearly can be seen the influence of Christian thought of original sin on Mu's interpretation of Confucianism.

How can one know man has moral consciousness? Mu points out that man is inborn with the nature of avoiding degeneration; this nature is morality. Man is not satisfied with endowed degeneration. This dissatisfaction manifests his wish and ability, through which he can get rid of natural sin and degeneration. This wish and ability present a creative force. It is from here that we recognize creativeness of man and his ambition. The creativeness implies two aspects: material and ethical or spiritual. Only the later presents true ideal. The creativeness in this aspect produces ethical values. Those ethical values, through one's continuous practicing, may lead him to be a profound person 君子 or a sage (Sheng 圣). This continuous practicing of ethical values is a process of self-education, educating himself to be inner profound person, and lastly to be a profound person as a whole.

In the recent Confucian scene, Du Wei-ming, a Professor of Chinese history and philosophy at Harvard University plays a very important role. He endeavors to re-establish Confucian thought in the societies where the Confucianism is dominant, and orients his studies to that goal.

Du asserts that Confucian philosophy is actually a philosophical school about man. Based on reflection on man, his body, mind, soul and god, the school provides a system of ren 仁 philosophy. Ren 仁, to him, is a very comprehensive notion. But its starting point is "the concrete, living human being".<sup>77</sup>

The highest human goal is not becoming a profound person, "but forming, through self-realization and community perfecting, a trinity with heaven and earth". How can this be obtained? Self-cultivation is the first step, training oneself through practicing Confucian values, for instances, ren 仁 (humanity), shu 恕

(reciprocity), xiao 孝 (filial piety), jing 敬 (reverence), cheng 诚 (authenticity) and so on. Self-cultivation lead to the realization of human way. The human way is the process by which man realizes the way of heaven. If one can complete this process, he is likely to be trinitized with the Heaven and the earth.